



## AAC Publications

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### Longs Peak, Wobbly Baknn Strips

Rocky Mountain National Park

Josh Wharton mixed climbing below the headwall taken by Baknnator Indirect and Wobbly Baknn Strips, partially visible in the ice dribbles left of the huge Obelisk corner. Photo by Dane Steadman  
**In mid-October, I made my first-ever trip to the east face of Longs Peak (14,259')**, with Kelly Cordes, Anne Gilbert Chase, and Allie Oaks. While climbing Field's Chimney on the lower east face, I noticed a stunning line of ice drips high on the left side of the Diamond. Later, I was amazed to learn those ice dribbles had likely never been climbed. The only recorded climb there was an old aid route, Baknn's A.P. (5.7 A1, McCallister-Tryda, 1977). [Baknn's ascends just left of The Obelisk pillar, which defines the left side of the Diamond, and well to the right of The Window mixed route or Window Pain (Cooper-Donahue, 2013), a rarely formed WI6+ runnel. Bruce Miller and the late Mike Bearzi attempted Baknn's A.P. as a mixed line in the 1990s, "bailing below the start of the real difficulties."]

As a rock climb, Baknn's was mungy and destined to obscurity, but as a mixed route it looked dreamy: drools of blue ice pouring from golden granite cracks. Maury Birdwell was game to check it out, so a week later we headed up.

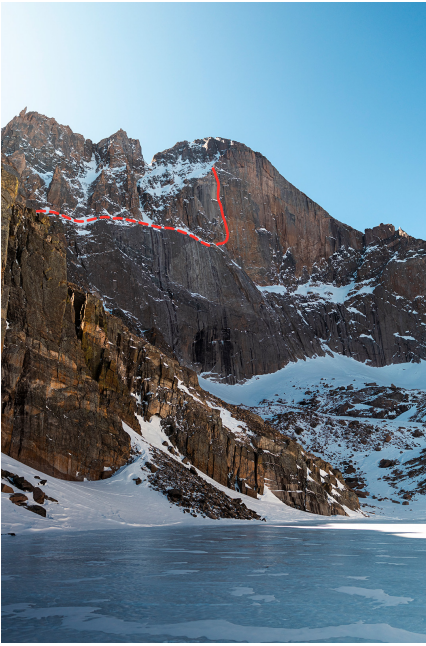
Approaching via Lambs Slide and the Broadway traverse, we started up The Window at an elevation of about 13,400 feet, then traversed right to join a crack line shared by two fairly obscure routes, Black Death and the start of The Wobblisk. A long, tricky pitch brought us to the ledge beneath Baknn's. The next 60 meters were magical, one of the finest winter pitches I've climbed: a blade of ice pouring from an overhung corner, a thinly iced chimney, traverses past daggers, and beautiful thin runnels to an icy ledge.

Above, the proudest finish was obvious—a crack system angling left, past two more icicles and a roof—but it looked properly hard. The “easy” way out didn't look very easy, and that's what we chose. I wished for safety goggles as I hooked up a gently overhanging, mossy corner, thankful for bomber cams as my vision grew blurrier. After 65 meters, a big ledge crowned the headwall. We continued up to Kiener's Route, traversed to the Notch, and descended via the Loft late into the night.

The next morning, I was already dreaming of returning for the proud finish. Josh Wharton was keen, so ten days later I was back on Longs with him. The lower pitches flew by. My first attempt on the crux ended with a whip down low. I lowered, pulled the rope, and a long time later, I called “off” after perhaps the hardest pitch I've climbed on tools in the mountains. We called our first line Wobbly Baknn Strips (WI5 M7+, about 250 meters of climbing above Broadway) and the harder finish Baknnator Indirect (WI5 M8).

—Dane Steadman

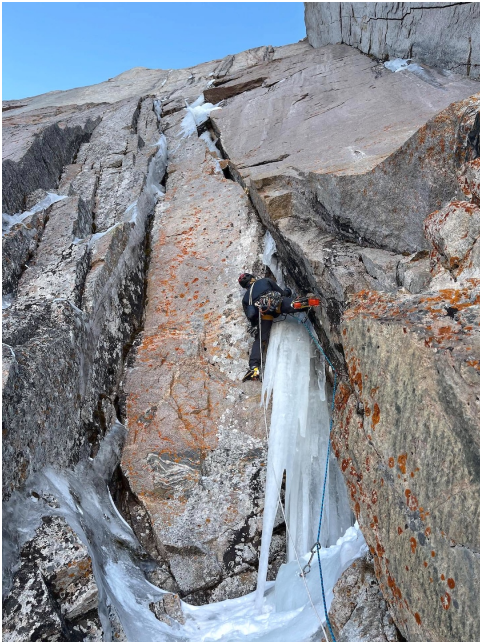
## Images



The solid line shows Wobbly Baknn Strips on the upper northeast face of Longs Peak. The dashed line shows the traversing approach across Broadway ledge from the top of the Lambs Slide couloir.



Josh Wharton mixed climbing below the headwall taken by Baknnator Indirect and Wobbly Baknn Strips, partially visible in the ice dribbles left of the huge Obelisk corner.



Dane Steadman starting the crux pitch of Wobbly Baknn Strips on Longs Peak. The line trended to the right above the highest visible ice to finish. Steadman returned to climb a harder finish, Baknnator Indirect (WI5 M8), angling left.



Dane Steadman on the crux pitch of Wobbly Baknn Strips on Longs Peak.



The upper northeast face of Longs Peak, showing (yellow line) Baknator Indirect (WI5 M8) and (red line) Wobbly Baknn Strips (WI5 M7+).

## Article Details

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